

Interview with Richard M. Cashin

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

RICHARD M. CASHIN

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Initial interview date: March 4, 1993

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Q: This is Paul McCusker interviewing Richard M. Cashin on March 4, 1993 at his residence. Dick would you tell me when and where you were born?

CASHIN: I was born in Boston, Massachusetts on April 3, 1924.

Q: What about your family? Did you grow up in a big family with lots of brothers and sisters?

CASHIN: I was the youngest by far of three children so in effect I had adult siblings.

Q: I see you didn't go far from home in order to go to college. You have your Bachelors from Harvard and then you went on to get your Masters moving the great distance to Boston University. What was the Masters degree in?

CASHIN: Well, it was in government and public administration. Not a great Masters degree but it had the merit of lasting only one year at a time when I was anxious to get on with my life, having taken three years out in the military during the war.

Q: What branch of the military were you in?

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CASHIN: I was in the Air Force and in the 14th Armored Division during the war.

Q: Did you get to go overseas during World War II?

CASHIN: Yes. I landed in Marseille and went up to Alsace and crossed the Rhine at the Rhine Palatinate and then came south of Munich where the war ended. All this with the 14th Armored Division.

Q: That was your first exposure to foreign climes I suppose?

CASHIN: That is right.

Q: Did that help to give you the impetus to enter the Department of State?

CASHIN: No, that interest had been established even before then. I can recall when I was still a junior in high school the Second World War had already begun in Europe. When I was a senior I wrote a long paper on the peace settlements after the First World War. By that time I had more or less set my course as being interested in foreign affairs and perhaps wanting to join the State Department.

Q: After getting your Masters degree, how did you get appointed an intern in the Department of State?

CASHIN: Well, the Department was thoroughly backed up in terms of recruitment of Foreign Service officers at that time but they were expanding activities in a variety of directions. Therefore they established this intern program, and advertized it. While I was Boston University I read about it, applied, was interviewed in Boston, accepted and I got my graduate degree on a Saturday afternoon and reported for work in Washington on the following Monday morning.

Q: What was your first assignment in the Department?

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CASHIN: The intern program consisted of rotational assignments and I went at one point to the Division of Foreign Service Personnel and worked on personnel policies. I thought I was interested in administrative affairs at that time.

Q: You had taken your degree in public administration.

CASHIN: That is right.

Q: How did you wind up in the Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs? Was that one of your rotational assignments?

CASHIN: No, it wasn't. I was in the management staff of the State Department and at my tender age advising people how to organize their lives. Apparently the people in the Bureau of United Nations Affairs, as it was then called, thought they saw somebody who might be useful to them and offered me a job, which I gratefully accepted.

Q: That was your first contact with the world of international organizations, I take it.

CASHIN: That is right.

Q: UNHCR and ICEM as they were called.

CASHIN: Well in those years it was called PICMME...Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe.

Q: Then you somehow wound up subverted by AID because your first assignment abroad was in Libya with AID. Is that correct?

CASHIN: Yes. I was working in the Refugee office and happened to meet a gentleman that I had met when I was in the Management staff, who had gone off with what was then called the Point Four Program, the Technical Cooperation Administration. I met him on the street one morning and we shook hands and went our respective ways. Later in the day I

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got a telephone call and he said to me, "How would you like to go to Libya?" Not knowing any better, I said, "Yes."

Q: How long were you with the mission and what sort of work were you doing?

CASHIN: It was more or less development assistance work. The distinguishing feature with Libya was the fact that it had virtually no technically qualified government. It had only become independent a few years before in 1951 and they did not have any trained people. The Italians were not strong colonialists in the sense of building the human resources of the country. We, therefore, had to set up something like an independent administration which was largely staffed by Americans to work along side these very weak government ministries. The fuel for this machine, the money, was really a form of rent for Wheelus Airfield where the US maintained a very large air base at that time.

It was not a typical technical assistance or development aid assignment because we had to do so much ourselves with the consent of the Libyan government but really without counterparts.

Q: How did you enjoy being in a Muslim Arab country? Did you get along all right?

CASHIN: Yes. Tripoli at the time I was there still had a strong Italian flavor. The Italians had been there for many years. Although the Libyans, I think, are very conservative in their religious observance, in their practice of their religion the edges had been rounded a bit by their long contact with the Italians.

Q: Then you returned to Washington for a year where they set you to studying.

CASHIN: Well, development economics was a new field. The separate study of how to manage economic development programs, how to finance them, and the role that bilateral donors and international agencies could play in promoting and accelerating the process, was really a post-war phenomenon. The literature was only then being started. I think

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quite wisely AID just contracted with the School for Advanced International Studies to put us through a course for about six months to get some grasp of the basics that had been developed up to that point.

Q: Then armed with this six-months of training, what did they send you out to do?

CASHIN: I was assigned to Ethiopia and went there in 1959. I went out as the program officer in what was then called the Point Four Mission in Addis Ababa.

Q: By this time were you enthusiastic about the potential of the US AID program? Was it called that at this time?

CASHIN: It had a variety of names over the years and I have forgotten what the name was in 1959. At one stage it was called the Foreign Operations Administration, the International Cooperation Administration, and, I think the present name has been probably the longest lasting it has ever had. I suspect it is about to be changed.

Q: There is a recurring effort to change the name but so far it hasn't been so far as I know.

CASHIN: Well, you know in Ethiopia again the aid program was really quite modest when I went there, something on the order of four or five million dollars a year.

Q: So the staff was smaller than the Embassy staff?

CASHIN: Well, you can hire quite a few people for that amount of money. It wasn't a huge program but it was sizeable in its way. But again it was a kind of rental payment for Kagnew Station in Eritrea. So I should by then have begun to realize how strongly driven the aid program was by political/military considerations. Certainly in retrospect it seems to me that I have devoted almost all of my career to one or another aspect of cold war activities...placing humanitarian aid and economic development at the service of these larger national interests.

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Q: That is no doubt true, but on the other hand national interests did happily prevail, but at an enormous cost. Let me ask you from Ethiopia, which again you were in an area that was heavily influenced by Italy...

CASHIN: It was indeed. However, the Ethiopians had more of a sense of their own identity and of their own history. The Emperor, whatever else you might have said about him, had taken a variety of steps to educate his people in ways that hadn't been available to the Libyans. So there was somebody on the other end of the line in Ethiopia in a way that was not true in Libya when I was there.

Q: Now you had two assignments on the African continent and I gather that you then went to Washington for a domestic assignment and wound up being in the Office of Central African Affairs.

CASHIN: I was the Director of the Office of Central African Affairs. This was a geographic concept that, I think, was peculiar to AID. It consisted of Ghana, Nigeria, what is now Zaire, Cameroon, the French Equatorials, Rwanda and Burundi.

Q: That is the area that people look at today and say that all of our bilateral, multilateral aid was wasted because the Africans, particularly in that part, had not risen above their level of abject poverty and have not been able to use the foreign aid to any appreciable effect. Do you agree with that assessment?

CASHIN: The picture is mixed. I don't know of any country in Africa that has had a steady progression over this period of time. I like to think that my Ghanaian friends, where I served at a later stage, after going through really quite a bad patch, have since 1983 performed quite well. Nigeria is very much of a mixed story. I haven't followed some of the others particularly carefully...the Cameroon and French Equatorial countries. The Zaire is a total disaster. And one for which at one stage I had great hopes, Angola, is now regrettably engaged in a civil war.

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Q: In Ghana, when you were director of AID there, did you feel that you accomplished something significant? Nkrumah was in power then wasn't he?

CASHIN: No, Nkrumah was deposed in 1966. I didn't go there until 1967.

No, I can't say that my time there, although we greatly enjoyed it and they were among the nicest people to live with that I could imagine...their human skills are superb...I wouldn't say that I took any great satisfaction with the accomplishments of that period. There was a military government.

There was an effort to return to civilian government but the results of the first civilian government were a great disappointment to everyone, I think. There was really no serious concerted effort to strengthen the economic management of the country. The political framework just didn't exist, the political will didn't exist. There was not a sufficient mass of understanding and of interest. Perhaps conditions had to get worse before they could get better.

Q: Dick, certainly in Ghana there was not the same type of political/military objectives on the part of the United States, so far as I am aware. What was our policy there besides trying to assure that we had an anti-communist regime there?

CASHIN: I think in terms of motive, probably our program there was as pure and genuinely concerned with economic development as any that I have been associated with. All the more discouraging that it wasn't possible at that time to do a great deal in terms of economic progress.

Q: That was because there wasn't the political will on the part of the Ghanaian government?

CASHIN: Yes. And the lack of discipline. When they finally got around to sorting things out in the early and mid '80s, they found that the cocoa marketing board which had been set

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up by the British to serve as a buffer between the cocoa farmers in Ghana and the world market, had been thoroughly mismanaged and exploited for political purposes. Farmers were getting something like 11 percent of the world market price of cocoa. The cocoa marketing board, itself, had something like 60,000 employees, more than the number of cocoa farmers in the country. It had just been thoroughly prostituted in terms of its original intention. It was typical of the mismanagement and corruption that affected a variety of state enterprises.

Q: I seem to remember that Ghana, even before Indonesia, was one of the first countries to reschedule its foreign debt. Is that your recollection?

CASHIN: Actually the Indonesian rescheduling came first. The first Ghanaian debt rescheduling, there have been several since, was convened in London in 1966. It shows you how new the technique was. It had been largely confined to private enterprise at that time, and largely confined to Latin America. Those of us who hadn't served in Latin America didn't know a lot about what debt rescheduling was in terms of its techniques and how the agreements were worked out. For want of anybody better, I headed the American delegation to the first Ghana debt rescheduling in London.

Q: There must have been people from the State Department who came to that meeting.

CASHIN: Yes, there was a fellow by the name of Al Gizauskas, who later went with the World Bank. We were all learning, believe me, including the people from the IMF. We finally found some friendly Dutch fellow who was there and who had been through this exercise with some Latin American countries on behalf of the Dutch government. He gave us sort of a course on how this thing was supposed to be organized. That was a good learning experience. Fortunately the United States did not have a significant debt with Ghana at the time. Our position was simply that those countries who did have a large debt should make a significant contribution in the form of rescheduling as a contribution to the total resource package, which would enable us to provide foreign aid in good conscience.

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It wouldn't have been very attractive for the United States government to be putting in fresh foreign aid resources while other countries were insisting on the full repayment of their outstanding debts.

Q: Were we engaged in infusion of balance of payments support to Ghana?

CASHIN: We did, partly as a matter of keeping the Ghanaian government on bit of a short leash. We were not entirely confident, as I say, in their political will and economic management. If you get into long term, large scale projects, as we had done with the Volta River Dam and the Tema Aluminum complex, these things play out over a long period of years. If you do commodity financing, balance of payments aid, this can be managed and fine-tuned from year to year or even from month to month in accordance with the performance of the government. So we were anxious not to get into long term commitments.

Q: Then you went from Ghana to my favorite developing country, as well, to Jakarta, Indonesia, which had just barely begun to recover from the Sukarno era. What did you feel entering on that vast nation's scene?

CASHIN: Well, the first thing that struck me was that they used a lot more zeros than they did in Ghana.

Q: In the currency you mean?

CASHIN: In everything...population. Indonesia was probably in retrospect the single most satisfying assignment from professional terms. It was also very pleasant in personal terms and I am very fond of Indonesians.

Here was a government that was really serious, was staffed with people who were probably better educated technically than most of us in the AID mission were. They

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had been educated in the United States through a very farsighted initiative of the Ford Foundation years before.

Q: The famous Berkeley Mafia.

CASHIN: That is right. They were installed in the key economic management positions in the government...really only a dozen, a handful of them...and given strong political backing by the military government. It was a tremendous advantage to get technically competent people strongly supported politically.

Q: And a major resource once it got under control of the government was petroleum.

CASHIN: Yes. But that raises an issue, however, because the petroleum sector represented a kind of third force in the constellation of power and influence in Indonesia and did not for many years come under the influence of the Berkeley mafia, the technocrats. There was a kind of submerged tension between the technocrats on the one hand and the petroleum sector, which was run by Ibnu Sutowo, on the other.

Q: A general?

CASHIN: A pediatrician.

Q: A pediatrician who stumbled upon the unmanaged petroleum resources in Sumatra, as I recall, and became the czar of petroleum in Indonesia. As a matter of fact, he would not run the proceeds of the sales abroad through the Central Bank, if I recall.

CASHIN: Well, my friends in the Central Bank were appalled at many of the things that went on. They kept telling the foreign lenders, the banks, that the loans to Pertamina were not sovereign risk loans, that Pertamina should stand on its own credit worthiness. But there was a kind of feeding frenzy when it came to the banks. Ibnu was viewed as a man who was as good as his word, that all the loans got serviced promptly, until the house of cards collapsed, at which point the government of Indonesia decided that although

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not a sovereign risk, and they could have declined payment, that in terms of their overall reputation it was probably wise to swallow it. I must say to this day that I resent the fact that the Indonesian government had to make good on something like \$10 billion worth of bad loans contracted by a corrupt management in the oil industry.

Q: Well, with some assistance from outside pressures who put the contract over on Ibnu Sutowo and onto the Indonesian government.

CASHIN: I am not sure I understand what you just said.

Q: What I am saying is that I think there were people outside of Indonesia who were interested in a contract for tankers to be built and had strong financial interests. They exercised influence on Sutowo to go ahead with those contracts to the disadvantage, ultimately, of the Indonesian government. Wouldn't you agree there was a great deal of corruption both within and actively and passive bribery from outside the country?

CASHIN: Well, you know I don't know all of the details of how this money was made to flow. I have heard all sorts of stories, of course. My impression is that the foreign oil companies entered into what amounted to sweetheart contracts with Pertamina, which left plenty of room for them to kick back part of the proceeds. And Ibnu, himself, I know I have heard stories to the effect that he went into a private partnership with a ship broker in Switzerland.

Q: The gentleman was named Rappaport.

CASHIN: Yes, that is right. I can remember they chartered some Norwegian tankers one morning with something like \$7-8 million, went out to a good lunch, and then rechartered them to Pertamina in the afternoon for \$40 million. Things like that were reported to have gone on. They invested long and borrowed short and didn't get value for money when they spent the borrowings, and eventually it collapsed.

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This created, you might imagine, a certain amount of, again largely submerged, tension between those of us who were interested in economic development and good management in the economy, and colleagues in the Embassy who took it as their job and mission to be friendly with and promote the interests of the oil companies in Indonesia.

What ambassador would want to have a major oil company call up the White House and say, "Your guy out there is causing us difficulty. We have perfectly workable arrangements with the Indonesian government which are favorable to our company and we think we should be supported."

Q: You are talking about the oil companies that were resident and doing business in Indonesia then.

CASHIN: Yes.

Q: I think the contract that got them into serious trouble was a contract purchase their own oil tankers and not rely thereafter upon oil tankers owned by foreign companies. That was at least the rational of the contract. But, of course, there was too much corruption involved.

CASHIN: The tankers were only one aspect of the problem.

Q: But that is where the \$10 billion figure comes from doesn't it?

CASHIN: That was not only tankers. But it was eventually sorted out.

Q: Because the government picked up the tab.

CASHIN: It picked up the tab but also brought Pertamina under control. Before I left Indonesia in 1975 the fellow who was with the rice marketing agency asked me if I would come with him for dinner. We went down to a restaurant in Tanjung Priok, the port, and during the course of the evening he said that the President had lost confidence in Ibnu Sutowo. I went back the next day and wrote a long message reporting this conversation.

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My informant was a close personal friend of the President. He told me that he had had this conversation with the President while they were both in their pajamas early in the morning on the porch of the President's palace in Bogor. So I went back and I must confess with some pleasure wrote and sent to Washington a report of this conversation indicating that finally, at long last, that the President had lost confidence in the management of Pertamina.

Q: It certainly was at long last considering the President had been in power since 1966 and had indeed relied upon Ibnu Sutowo for political and financial support.

CASHIN: That is correct.

Q: Dick, what was your greatest frustration in Jakarta? Was it, perhaps, our Embassy personnel or ambassador?

CASHIN: You know, I think that probably the Indonesian experience points up that as long as we divide our functions the way we do and assign one semi-autonomous agency of the State Department to deal with economic aid, and another to deal with political relations, there is built into this system the potential for tension. It revolves in my mind around time perspectives. Development is a long term undertaking. The political climate can change in relatively short time. It seems to me that the people who watch political relationships watch United Nations votes, or support on particular issues, tend to have a much shorter time perspective. Whereas those of us in economic development tend to weight the longer term more heavily and would be willing to accept a far wider range of short term political outcomes in the interests of the overall progress of living standards of people.

Q: So you would say that the political side of the US government presence abroad, tends to be governed by the crisis mentality as opposed to economic assistance programs which deal in a longer term. Is that what you are saying?

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CASHIN: That is right. My hope would be that in what must surely be a reorganization for international development in the present administration, that some way will be found to protect and buffer the longer term continuity of economic development programs and to protect them from undue short term political influence.

Q: From Jakarta you ended up back in Washington in the Office of Legislative Affairs for AID. What kind of job was that?

CASHIN: This was really a complete change of pace. I had done five years in Indonesia, which is about the outer limit that tour of duty policy would permit. What was available when I went back to Washington was in the Office of Legislative Affairs. It consisted of editing the enormous documentation that goes to the Congress each year in support of the authorizing and appropriation legislation for the foreign aid program. This means pulling together in a series of volumes every individual project activity planned to be undertaken by the agency all the way around the world and making all the figures add up. And making sure that the thematic content is consistent and presents the best possible face for the agency in terms of its dealing with Congress. Then to monitor the progress of the hearings, the markup of the legislation and the eventual enactment.

It was marvelous insight into the legislative process and an education into the internal workings of AID.

Q: You did that for a couple of years and then went off to Pakistan in 1977. Was there any war going on there at that time?

CASHIN: Not at the moment. But I preceded my wife to post and recall sitting in the house when the lights went out. The steward said, "It's an air raid." I said, "How do you know?" He said, "Well the lights went out and I hear a siren in the distance and it is always like this when we have an air raid." Shortly thereafter the lights came back on again. It had been raining and this was the reason. The siren had something to do with the end of the

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Ramadan fast notifying everybody in Islamabad that it was time to eat. But that always stuck in my mind because the first thing he thought of was an air raid.

Q: How did you feel your mission in Pakistan went? Did you have the same sort of tensions?

CASHIN: Less so, I would say. The government was reasonably serious. The Pakistani staff was the best I have ever had in terms of local staff. It was a pleasure to work in the country because they were so very well educated and well prepared.

Q: This was already your third Muslim country. You must have felt as though you were becoming a specialist in Islamic affairs.

CASHIN: But they were so very different. Indonesians are Muslims in a very different way than Pakistanis. It is a much more gentle, humanistic reading of the Koran.

Q: In 1978 you moved from being the AID mission director in Pakistan to the delightful city we both love, Rome.

CASHIN: While I was in Washington doing this legislative job and not knowing exactly what the future held, I went and put my name on a list in the Bureau of International Organizations Affairs because I had heard that they were some times looking for candidates for positions in the UN. When I went in they were not particularly encouraging. They said somebody with my background really belonged in UNDP, but UNDP was going through a difficult period and they didn't have a lot of money and there were too many Americans anyway, but they said it doesn't cost anything to leave my name so to go ahead. I did and forgot, really, that I had ever done so.

I went off to Pakistan and would have been quite content to stay there when suddenly a telegram arrived from the Department asking whether I would be interested in a position as the head of the Project Management Division in the World Food Programme in Rome. I

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went home that night and told my wife and she said that she would be delighted to move to Rome. It came at a good time because the US assistance program to Pakistan had been put on hold by the Carter administration over the nuclear issue. The Pakistan government, even then, was understood to be pursuing a program to develop nuclear capability.

Q: Had Pakistan signed the NPT...Non-proliferation Treaty?

CASHIN: I frankly don't know. My knowledge of these things comes from such encounters...there was a French fellow that one of my colleagues met at the Intercon Hotel in Rawalpindi and he said, "Are you the new chef here?" He said, "No, no, I have come on the nuclear program."

Q: The French were actively selling the nuclear knowhow around the world.

CASHIN: It is not unlikely that the Pakistanis were interested in this. The Indians were known to have exploded a device and as we discussed earlier, the Pakistanis were absolutely paranoid about the possibility of being attacked...at least they were then.

Q: How long did it take you to make this transmission from the world of bilateral assistance to multilateral assistance?

CASHIN: I went directly from Islamabad to Rome and managed to settle in quite quickly. It didn't take long.

Q: Didn't you have to be interviewed some place?

CASHIN: Oh, yes. I left out the mechanics. My name was put forward and I went to Rome and stayed in a hotel we had stayed in before and met an AID colleague in the corridors. He said to me, "What are you doing here?"

Q: Who was that?

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CASHIN: I have forgotten the fellow's name but think he was the mission director in Tunisia at the time. So I think a slate of American candidates were interviewed. The fellow who was handling this in the Embassy said, "Don't you want to move hotels since there are two of you staying in the same hotel being interviewed for the same job?" I said, "No, no, we are good boys and understand each other."

Q: So the guy who was director in Tunisia lost out to the guy who was director in Pakistan.

CASHIN: Apparently.

Q: Tell me about the World Food Programme? There is a lot of confusion in the public's mind between the World Food Council and the World Food Programme. Is the World Food Program a UN budgeted program?

CASHIN: It is part of the UN system. It was established in the early '60s, about 1963, I think really on the initiative of Senator McGovern, when the US had taken the lead in the 1950s using food aid as a relief and development resource. It was thought that other governments might very well join in this.

The World Food Programme was set up as a vehicle for the UN system and became the food aid agency of the UN. Rome, as you know, is the site of the UN's agriculturally related agencies. The oldest and biggest, by far, being the FAO, followed by the World Food Programme in 1963, the World Food Council and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. The latter two had been established following the World Food Conference which was held in Rome in 1974. The World Food Council is in effect a small secretariat that staffs an annual meeting of ministers of agriculture. The International Fund for Agricultural Development is a lending institution for small farmers.

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The World Food Programme is the food aid arm of the United Nations. It receives donations of food from member governments and then distributes them in accordance with need for both emergency relief and for development purposes around the world.

Q: Is the World Food Programme what we call a sort of stocking organization rather than waiting for a demand before you ask government to supply it?

CASHIN: Yes. I am reminded of a young woman who was recruited from some South American country and brought to Rome for orientation. She came in to see me after she had been there for a couple of weeks and said, "Mr. Cashin I have been here for two weeks, but I still haven't seen where you keep the food."

The appropriate answer to your question concerns what we call the IEFER, the International Emergency Food Reserve. What we ask is for governments to earmark a certain amount of food to be on call for emergency use. Then beyond that there are regular pledges of assistance that can be drawn down for support of development projects, child feeding, food for work projects, etc.

So, in effect, we have a drawing account for food for emergencies, which is very significant.

Q: Well, yes, it is in the news right now as a matter of fact. Dick, I know you were in Rome for eight years. Did you feel that the multilateral approach which had some advantages over the bilateral approach that everybody knows about, worked as efficiently as the bilateral program that you were very much a part of administering so many years? How would you assess the merits of the multilateral and the bilateral, leaving aside the political advantages?

CASHIN: I tend by nature to be skeptical and must confess that when I accepted the position in Rome and took a look at how the agency was structured with a 30-member governing body, a staff drawn from all around the world and not always for the best

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reasons, it looked like a structure that really wouldn't work. I must confess that I was greatly surprised and pleased to see how well it functioned. There are lots of capable people in the secretariat, lots of well-intentioned people in the secretariat. There are some less intentioned and some less capable, but somehow or other the capable ones have learned how to make up for and compensate for the weaker members.

Q: Isn't that true in AID also?

CASHIN: Oh, we had all strong people in AID!

It was more pronounced, I think, in the UN. The governing body was sometimes frustrating. The smaller countries tended to be represented by their resident representatives to the FAO. In other words they didn't have a strong particular interest in the World Food Programme, as such. Some governments, like the United States government, had sent a special delegation specifically focused on the food program. But most of them simply relied on their FAO representatives. Not all of them were terribly well briefed. Some were not briefed or instructed at all. Furthermore the World Food Programme is curiously structured. It becomes almost ecclesiastical in its complexities because it was founded as a creature of the joint effort of the Secretary General and of the Director General of FAO. Its governances are to some measure divided between those two. For example, I had to be interviewed by the Director General of FAO before I took my position. He had to consent. I was at a level of the organization which required his consent.

The degree of his influence over the World Food Programme, which, after all disposes of significant resources...relying on the value placed on the donated food by the member government, it is the largest UN agency bar none. It is bigger than the UNDP. It is bigger than UNICEF. It is bigger than any of the others. The ability to direct food to this country or that country becomes an important political prerogative. The Director General of the FAO has a strong sense of power. He was by the constitution entitled to sign off on emergency

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assistance. He had this role with respect to the appointment of senior personnel and he provide a variety of administrative services to the agency. The idea being that when the World Food Programme was established that they wouldn't duplicate the existing administrative services already existing in Rome in the FAO. It was thought to be a matter of efficiency.

However, Dr. Saouma saw the potential and used such things as his internal audit staff as a source of influence over the Programme. While I was there there was a very embarrassing and unseemly open conflict between the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, an Australian diplomatic, and the Director General of FAO.

In some degree that detracted from the satisfaction that I might otherwise have had from working in the UN system. I thought it was embarrassing to have this essentially power related quarrel so widely and publicly known.

Q: The Australian left and Saouma is still there.

CASHIN: Yes, the Australian left having completed two five year terms. I left before he completed his first term and went as a matter of courtesy to say goodbye to Dr. Saouma. Since he had interviewed me on the way in I thought it was appropriate to go and pay my respects on my way out. He said, "Oh, Mr. Cashin I know how you have suffered over there under that man. My heart has gone out to you. I made a major mistake but promise you I will not do that again. This hand will not put pen to paper to reappoint that man. I promise you that." Six weeks later he did exactly that.

Q: Isn't there an American heading WFP?

CASHIN: That is correct.

Q: What's his name?

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CASHIN: It is a woman who used to run the food stamp program in the Department of Agriculture.

Q: Well, Dick I know you haven't stopped working since you left the World Food Programme and came back from Rome. You have since graced New York and been active in voluntary agency work ever since then and still are. Before we close I would like to go back and ask you a couple of questions about relationships...now I had not worked at any post during my Foreign Service career in a developing country with an AID mission, except five years in Indonesia. Of course I was aware of the AID personnel policies before I got to Jakarta, but that is where they came home to me. I think there has always been, and I would like you to discuss this if you would, a kind of love/hate relationship between the Foreign Service types and the AID types. My own recollection is that there was envy on both sides. That is to say, the foreign Service types envied the AID types because the AID types came in on a theory that it was a temporary organization and got higher salaries than the Foreign Service types. This was a cause of some envy on the part of the Foreign Service types. The other way around, the AID people, if I recall correctly, had envy or resentment against the Foreign Service types because they felt the Foreign Service types wanted their prestige of being a Foreign Service officer more than perhaps was justified.

What was your feeling after years of having started out first of all in the Department of State and then gone with AID for the major part of your government career?

CASHIN: I think your description is probably more or less accurate of the reflection of typical attitudes. I think the AID people were in a sense looked down on as sort of second class citizens, of doing grubby things with fertilizer, and that they didn't share the rarefied world of high politics.

Q: There were a lot of us in the Foreign Service who didn't share that world either.

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CASHIN: But it never really bothered me. I was doing what I wanted to do and felt that I had in a sense one foot in the political side of things because we couldn't function without being aware of the political environment and of people we were working with and where they fit into the picture of the host government and what kind of influence they had. The other was trying to do something practical to help people towards better lives. So I figured that I had the best of both worlds.

Q: You had reached the level to be director of the AID program in three distinct countries and that must have given you an good insight into the relationships between Embassy personnel, particularly ambassadors, and AID personnel, particularly AID directors. I assume that you were always a member of what we got around to call the country team and participated in the appropriate meetings.

CASHIN: Yes.

Q: Did you feel that the ambassador was the one who was really calling the shots if it came to a question of whether AID should undertake a particular project or not? Would the ambassador weigh in or would he or she leave that up to you?

CASHIN: Well, I have had ambassadors turn to me when there was an issue under discussion and say, "Dick what do you think? Your political judgment is as good as mine." I have had others who would never have said anything like that.

You know it really comes down to who has the best sense of US national interest. I remember one time when I was in Washington, in the Office of Central African Affairs, and this was before Nkrumah was overthrown in Ghana. We received a request for something like \$100 million food aid program from Nkrumah. The country was being dramatically mismanaged from an economic standpoint. The man didn't have an economic bone in his body. He did a lot for the country in terms of giving it a sense of nationhood, but economic management was poor and increasingly oppressive. Even our Ghanaian friends were

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saying to us at the time, "Please don't do anything to prolong this government. The man is digging himself into a hole and will collapse soon. Just don't help him." However, my opposite number in the State Department said, "Well, we have to respond positively to this request. It is in the national interest that we do so because if we don't it will rock the boat."

I thought that was a very woolly headed, indeed wrong headed, interpretation of national interests. But the Department would be loath to surrender its role as the interpreter of national interests, although I think at times their performance in doing so is very amateurish.

Q: I think the Foreign Service since then has tended to back away from that position to a large extent.

CASHIN: They frequently used to talk about influencing people's votes in the United Nations. Sometimes it has precisely the opposite affect. They will accept the assistance but in order to prove their independence they will vote against you.

Q: Well, Dick, unless you have anything you would like to add to this I want to express my personal appreciation and the appreciation of the Association for Diplomatic Studies for your consenting to this interview and review of a very interesting and certainly active career internationally. That is 37 years of US government and UN employment...23 of them, as I calculate, in developing countries...well we will exclude Rome from developing countries...and 14 in US assignments. So, thank you very much.

CASHIN: Thank you.

End of interview